

Anwell Academy
Ringoes, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-513

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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10-RING

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Amwell Academy
Ringoes, Hunterdon County, New Jersey

Owner: Dr. Theodore Whittelsey

Date of Erection: 1811

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Very good

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - stone
with dressed quoins

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - pitch

Historical Data:

On May 1, 1811 Titus Quick and his wife Hannah gave title to Colonel David Bishop, George Dilts, John Lequear, David Manners, and John Schenck as trustees of Amwell Academy for the tract of land upon which this building stands. The school was erected that same year; a great deal of the work was done without any reimbursement. The local masons and carpenters contributing their share along with the farmers who hauled the stone which came in part from Sandy Ridge and in part from the Sourland Mountains. It was used as a school until about 1830 when it was closed. In 1868 the property was

purchased by Dr. Cornelius W. Larison who with his brother the Reverend Andrew D. Larison incorporated The Seminary of Ringoes. This was opened in 1869 to pupils of both sexes. The school existed until 1881; Reverend Larison died a few years before that and his wife became vice-principal of the Lewisburg Institute. Dr. Larison also had less to do with the school; he served in 1874-1875 as Professor of Natural Science at Bucknell resigning to resume his medical practice at Ringoes in 1875 after the death of his partner, Dr. Lee. In the same year he started the Academy of Science and Arts, not to be confused with the Seminary, and in 1876 he was appointed Professor of Zoology of Bucknell; he continued his practice at Ringoes besides giving a course of lectures each year at Bucknell. At present the building is used as a private residence.

The corner quoins and the window heads are brownstone with tooled face. The cornice, the front entrance, floors, base, some trim, the first floor partitions, and the stairs to the second floor are original. The rear and end doors are not original. The second floor had when it was built three classrooms - one small room opposite the stairs and one large room at each end of the building. There were no fireplaces on the second floor. Plaster was placed directly on the stone wall and all the plaster walls and ceiling were whitewashed. The roof has been recently reslated. The attic is unfinished.

Bibliography:

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District Officer


A D D E N D U M

A building dignified in mass is provided by the 54 foot 8 inches front by 26 feet 8 inches depth and 23 feet elevation of front and rear walls; in composition this is a post-dated example of American Georgian precedent. This designation is further indicated by the massive corner quoins and keystoned flat and window heads all of tooled brownstone, features with which a projecting base course would have been consistent, and by the large size of the twenty-four pane windows. The material and scale thus established suggest a more imposing entrance doorway than the comparatively small and typically domestic one which the building received.

The ground floor plan reveals the central stairhall from front to rear entrances, a standard arrangement in the more formal types of Georgian and Federal mansions. On one side of this hall is a large class room 21 feet 5½ inches by 23 feet 4 inches balanced on the other side by two rooms of 13 feet 5 inches and 9 feet 5 inches width respectively and 22 feet length. The second floor plan was originally composed of a small room in front of the stairway, between two large classrooms. The garret story was unfinished. The existing partitions dividing the two large rooms of the second floor are of recent date. The interior woodwork mantels, stairway, baseboard, door and window trim is a very plain rendering of the molded work of the period, a bead fillet with a broad fascia being used variously in all these features. Tri-panelled shutters existing on the front windows are not shown in the survey drawings of the elevations as likewise the severely plain mantel shelf.

Bibliography:

Information from architectural notes by
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